

INTERVIEW

Personal dialogue between
PL USA Magazine and the
Sport's Greatest Names.

ERNIE FRANTZ

as interviewed for Powerlifting USA by Marty Gallagher

Ernie Frantz has been on the strength scene for forty years. Wow! That's a long time. But as Ernie says, "It ain't the age, it's the mileage." Frantz has lived in and around Chicago for all of his sixty years. He hailed from Aurora, home of Wayne and Garth, the Mirth-mobile and Stan Mikita. Frantz and his brothers started lifting weights in the 50's as kids. By the 60's they had become fixtures on the burgeoning "Chicago Scene".

Ernie remembers fondly those lolly times when Chi-town was weight mecca with the Duncan Y and the high-holy shrine. "Oh yeah, I remember Bill Seno, Chuck Nootens, Fred Lowe, Alan Ball, Sergio, Galda... yeah, it was a great time. Bodybuilders, powerlifters, olympic lifters - we all trained together and each dabbled in the others and each dabbled in the others disciplines. Sergio could snatch 300 and clean & jerk 400. Bodybuilding gave "athletic points" in scoring, so the bodybuilders powerlifted and O-lifted. Powerlifting was in it's infancy. Chicago was a magnet. I miss the cross-training of those days... everyone is such a specialist nowadays... no one would dare dream of competing in two sports much less three. In those days we practiced a little of all three weight training disciplines."

Frantz began competing in both powerlifting and bodybuilding. He continued improving and growing until in 1972 he pulled-off a truly wondrous feat; he finished in 2nd place in the national powerlifting championships (losing 1st place when a 3rd attempt deadline was first passed, then, after a judging conference, turned down,



ERNIE FRANTZ, President of the American Powerlifting Federation

Frantz continues to lift to this day. His most recent accomplishment was becoming the first 60-year old to squat 700 pounds (722). Frantz has won ump-teen national and world titles and was instrumental in establishing master (over 40) lifting in this country. He is, and always was, first and foremost an athlete. That he happens to be involved in the founding and ongoing management of one of the three major powerlifting organizations is to him, purely incidental to his being an athlete.

The American Powerlifting Federation was originally formed as a format for master lifters. Perceiving neglect towards the over-40 lifters, Frantz innocently sought to fill a need for older lifters. One thing led to another and the APF soon broadened to accommodate an ever-widening segment of dissatisfied and disgruntled powerlifters. The new organization held it's first world championships in 1984 and has since been a thorn in the establishment's side ever since. Frantz has a straightforward conversational style common to the Chicago area. You never have a hard time figuring out what's

ing, both here and abroad, people that I respected and admired, encouraged and pleaded with me to form a rival organization.

PL USA: I was in Pacific National room the year at the Senior National APF. What do you say to critics who suggest the American Powerlifting Federation should be called the Ernie Frantz Powerlifting Federation?

FRANTZ: I created the American Powerlifting Federation from nothing! In one sense, powerlifting is better off as a result of the APF. We should have the American-European-run approach the IPF favor. We put some American favor back into powerlifting, and as a result, we have loosened up the IPF considerably. Our influence on governing, i.e., we are a organization run by lifters for lifters; not a organization run by bureaucrats who pompously lord over the lifters - as the IPF was when we started, provided an alternative and some competition. Monopolies are bad for the customer.

As far as the APF goes, I've invested tens of thousands of dollars and fifteen years of my life. This is a labor of love and I will do what is necessary to insure

PL USA: It all dove-tails back to the question of re-unification. Would you sit and meet to discuss a powerlifting re-unification?

FRANTZ: Certainly. I take no pleasure from the splintering of the sport. I see the advantages of a re-united sport. I would be happy to sit down and talk with leaders from the USPF, ADFPA, IPF, to discuss the "big tent" philosophy. You design a party platform broad enough to allow many divergent viewpoints and philosophies to coexist. If the factions can efficiently band together, the power, efficiency and competence of the super-organization far surpass anything the individual organizations are capable of.

FRANTZ: Oh, we are all increasingly aware as to the tremendous advantages re-unification would have. Big Tent... I like it! Set it up, Marty, I'll be there.

PL USA: How about the future, Ernie?

FRANTZ: I tell you, Marty, I'd like to retire. I'm sixty now and within a few years I'd like to get out, step back, and take a good, hard look around. If, after an extended vacation, I wanted to re-enter some area, so-be-it. Otherwise, I would be free of schedule and commitments.

PL USA: Sounds good.

PL USA: What are those Ernie?

FRANTZ: Simple, Marty, of the lifter, by the lifter, for the lifter. If we err, we err in the lifter's direction. Sometimes things get a little loose but our hearts are in the right place.

PL USA: What can be done to resolve the lawsuit so we can have an IPF World Championships held state-side? The only ones being hurt by this situation are the American powerlifters and public. You talk about being of, by and for the lifter - so why the lawsuit? You yourself have said that you never expect to see a dime.

FRANTZ: Geez, Marty, I feel bad about the situation, honestly. These things, when you set them in motion, seem to have a life of their own. Had I known where this would lead way-back-when-ever, I would have thought harder about it. The girls were my training partners, friends and buddies. I was responsible. Some body had to stand up to these pompous asses.

PL USA: Any on-going dialogue?

FRANTZ: No, not currently. Though I am certainly always available to talk.

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